

# 4. MOTIVATION OF STUDENTS TO ACHIEVE SET GOALS

**This chapter deals with the following content:**

- **the student's motivation to study;**
- **the theory of needs that steer us in life;**
- **the methods and techniques that can help in identifying student motivation (coaching method of posing questions, the GROW model and SWOT analysis);**
- **how to help the student define their specific goals and how to formulate an action plan to achieve them;**
- **what to do if a student is non-responsive and unmotivated by your efforts.**

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Motivation is a force that creates behaviour through which we satisfy a need. Motivation is a force concealed behind our behaviour – understanding the motive hidden behind an action is the key to motivation. Knowing what the individual wants to achieve is the essence of motivation to achieve a goal. Understanding the primary motive for an action is the key to motivating anyone, including yourself.

**As a tutor you must discover in working with students what their inner motivation is.** Without inner motivation it does not work, and external rewards are just short-term solutions.

Motivation was researched by Abraham Maslow, an American psychologist and founder of humanist psychology, who in his paper *A Theory of Human Motivation* divided human needs into four basic or lower needs (i.e. those that are important principally for human survival) and three higher needs (needs for personal growth). In terms of their importance he ranked them into what is called a hierarchy of needs. Understanding the concept of the hierarchy of satisfying needs is vital to understanding the motivation of each individual, and of course students and their motivation to study.

Maslow's ranking of needs is composed of physiological needs, followed by safety needs, love and social needs and esteem needs. At the peak of the author's pyramid we find the highest needs of humans, i.e. self-fulfilment or self-actualisation needs. When we satisfy the basic needs, we start seeking out other areas of need: success, emotional fulfilment, personal growth, self-respect.

The key to true motivation, whereby we motivate ourselves or others, is which of the stated needs is most important for that person at a given time. Motivation is very personal and can change in an instant if the priorities change. Motivation can change during an activity. Example: you start training to run for weight loss, then you run for the sense of wellbeing, and then for the enjoyment of the sport itself.

## 4.1. Techniques and tools for motivating others

Encourage the student first to explore their wishes and needs that guide them in their studies, so that through joint work the two of you can more easily discover where their motivation lies. Are they really interested in the course they have chosen? Are they studying for themselves or others (e.g. parental pressure)? Are they using study to fulfil their interests and dreams, or are they studying so that later it will be 'easier to find a job'? Do they just want to get the course 'done', or do they want to prove themselves in a given field of expertise?

### a) Coaching

In researching the area of motivation there is a useful method known as 'coaching', which is in fact a **method of clear and effective posing of questions** that enables more effective learning and development of the individual. It is focused on ways of behaving to achieve goals, raising motivation and establishing the right strategies. It serves to encourage the development of values such as being proactive, innovative and responsible. Coaching helps a person make changes in an area/areas that are important for them: in other words 'taking a step forward' in the direction they want, and mainly in a way that aligns with them and will bring the desired results.

Through the coaching method you can help the student:

- become conscious of what is important for them;
- define clear goals, understanding and personal growth;
- expand awareness of themselves and their surroundings;
- and guide, motivate and encourage them on the path to their individual goal.

## b) GROW model

The GROW model (taken from Whitmore, 2002) can be used as a guideline/starting point for conversation. The model is aptly abbreviated as an indication of growth, while each letter also denotes one of the steps explained below. These are guidelines to have in one's head during a conversation with the student, and they help steer the conversation towards identification of their motivation, goals and results.

**TO: topic** – what would you like to talk about?

**G: goal** – what would you like to achieve in the tutor meeting? What is the desired status?

**R: reality, research** – what is going on currently in the student's life? What is troubling them? Where do they not know or are unable to see the way ahead?

**O: options** – together seeking possibilities and methods that might lead the student to the desired status.

**W: will** – where is the student's will and motivation? What will they do? What are the next steps? What is the most important thing for them from this meeting?

**ME: monitoring and evaluating** – how will the student monitor their shift, their success? How will they know that they succeeded? What will the difference be in their life?

Some examples of questions that can help you uncover the student's motivation and goals using the GROW model:

- What do you actually want? What would satisfy you?
- What does \_\_\_\_\_ represent for you?
- How does that look right now? Tell me something about it.
- What do you feel you could do in this regard in the next month?
- What else could you do?
- What would your life look like if you had already done this?
- If you could do anything, what would that be?
- What is the possibility of you really doing this?

- What do you need for this?
- What can you do starting tomorrow? What will you do tomorrow?
- How will you know that you succeeded?

## c) SWOT analysis

**For easier identification of internal and external factors, together with the student you can also do a SWOT analysis,** which identifies strengths (S), weaknesses (W), opportunities (O) and threats (T). The analysis can be applied to yourself, others, studies, personal life and so forth.

In a SWOT analysis you place under the microscope four aspects, strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. The purpose of the analysis is assistance in decisions about where specifically to steer oneself and one's life/studies.

First of all there needs to be a demarcation of **strengths/weaknesses** and **opportunities/threats**. The first two aspects relate to internal and the second two to external factors. The main difference here is that with internal factors we have some influence, we can adapt, develop or take some other action. With internal factors we are in a region of our own influence. Opportunities/threats relate to external factors on which we have no influence and we cannot ourselves do anything directly other than adapt our inner qualities, and we can use opportunities as a tool for motivation. Appendix 3 in the final part of the Manual offers an example of a SWOT analysis and questions that can help you in your work. You can use it as a worksheet to share with students.

## 4.2. Setting goals

When you have analysed needs and motivations, the student can set goals. Setting goals is a very important factor on the path to success. Goals are set in order to steer one's life and to shift wherever one wishes. In setting goals it is important to know why you wish to achieve them – indeed the intent is more powerful than the result.

**A set goal will raise the student's motivation and steer them towards seeking the right strategies to achieve it.**

In the final section of the Manual (Appendix 4) you will find a worksheet that you can use with the student as a basis for the conversation about setting goals.

### 4.2.1. Smart goal setting

When you set or reframe your goals, it makes sense to stick to the formula recommended by numerous experts on goal setting. The basic formula centres on the English word SMART. Each individual letter in the word represents one of the important elements that every goal must contain.

A well-set goal should therefore be:

**S** – specific. What needs to be done and by when, who will do it and what is needed, why you are doing it and so forth.

**M** – measurable, since only in this way can you see how much progress you have made, while at the same time achieving goals on the path to ultimate success represents an additional motivation, since you have already achieved a goal.

**A** – attainable/achievable. Setting unattainable goals has a bad influence on morale and motivation. Smart goal setting is also important because through smart planning, a goal that seems unattainable can be made attainable.

**R** – realistic. If the goal seems realistic to you, you will make the effort and work to achieve it, otherwise (if the goals seem unrealistic from the outset) your motivation will fade sooner. You should set yourself both high and realistic goals at the same time, and you yourself can determine how high. It is easiest to set realistic goals based on past experience.

**T** – time-related, i.e. set in a time frame as explained above. Ask yourself: 'How much time will I need for a specific task?' or 'By when will the project be concluded?'

In the final part of the Manual you will find an exercise (Appendix 5), which using the described method will lead to a definition of your goal.

### 4.2.2. Action plan for achieving the goal

This is a plan of steps as to how the student will achieve their goals. Help the student define specific steps and activities for achieving their goal. You might be helped in this by the proposed action plan (Appendix 6), which you will find in the final part of the Manual.

## 4.3. Problems with non-responsive students

You are highly motivated to work with students, you are ready to study and educate, you are making an effort, yet still just one or two students are showing up to the tutorial meetings? Don't worry, you are not the only one. Stick to your mission. Find out what works. Get together and talk to other tutors to see what works for them.

Above all, think about:

- What are you actually offering the students? Why would they come to you for help?
- In what way are you letting the students know that they can get the help of a tutor? Through what channels do the students respond (events, notice board, internet, email, Facebook, Instagram, telephone messages and so forth)?
- Are you in personal contact with the students?
- Do you know what they need?
- Have you given notice of the times and locations of meetings in advance and in due time so that the students can organise their time?

And do not forget, it is your responsibility to do your work professionally, in good faith and to the best of your abilities. What others take from you or not is their responsibility, not yours.

### **In conclusion, another story that you can share with your students**

One day a distinguished professor at a French faculty of economics was asked to give a lecture on the topic 'Efficient and economical planning of an individual's time'. He was supposedly speaking to around 15 directors of large North American corporations. The lecture was to be one of five workshops of a one-day seminar. This gave the distinguished professor just one hour for his lecture. So when he stood up in front of the elite group, who were ready to note down every word he said, he looked around the lecture hall and said: 'Let's do an experiment.' From under the lectern he produced a huge glass jug (which could hold more than four litres of fluid) and placed it in front of him.

He then took a dozen round stones, about as big as tennis balls, and carefully one by one, put them into the glass jug. When the jug was filled to the brim and he could not put anything else in it, the professor looked up and asked his audience: 'Is the jug full?'

They all said yes. The professor waited a moment, then asked again: 'Really?'

Then from under the lectern he took out a pot full of little pebbles. With some precision he sprinkled them among the large stones and then lightly shook the glass jug. The pebbles were distributed around the stones, all the way to the bottom. Again he asked his audience: 'Is this jug full?' Now his students slowly grasped the process. One of them answered: 'It's probably not full.'

'So,' continued the professor. Then from under the lectern he produced a bucket of sand. He carefully shook it into the glass jug. The sand filled up the spaces between the stones and pebbles. Once again he asked: 'Is the jug full?'

This time his audience, without any hesitation and in one voice, answered: 'No, it's not full!'

'So,' continued the professor, who then picked up a jug of water from the lectern, and poured it into the glass jug, up to the brim. He asked: 'What great truth does this experiment reveal to us?'

The boldest person in the audience thought about the topic of the lecture and said: 'The experiment shows us that even though a person might have a completely full timetable, he can, if he really wants, still find time for something important.'

The professor said to him: 'No, that's not it.'

'The great truth is this: If a person does not first fill up the jug with the biggest stones, later on he will not be able to get everything else into the jug.'

There was dead silence. The professor continued: 'What are the big stones in your life?'

'Your health, family friends, fulfilling dreams, learning and education so you can do what makes you happy, rest, fighting for your principles, taking time for yourself and so forth.'

'What you need to remember is that what a person needs to put in first place in his life is the "big stones", otherwise it might happen that he will not be successful in life.'

'If a person prioritises those little pebbles, he will fill his life with little things and will not have enough precious time for the important things in life.'

'So don't forget to ask yourself this question: What are the big stones in my life?

And first start with them.' With a slow wave the professor greeted his audience and left the lecture hall.

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